

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

February 16, 2010

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Sebelius,

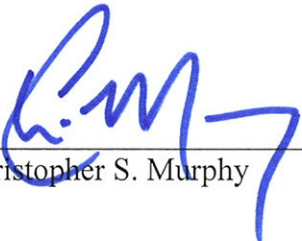
We write today as members of Congress concerned with the distribution of the \$490 million in contingency funds released through the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) on January 20, and to urge that you release the remaining \$100 million in Fiscal Year 2010 LIHEAP contingency funds to cold-weather states.

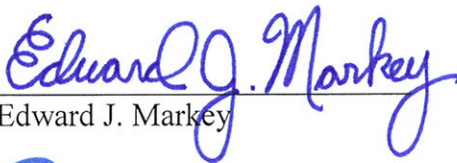
While we appreciate the degree to which your department attempted to address the needs of states experiencing high unemployment and unseasonably cold winters, it should not come at the expense of consumers in cold-weather states who are still struggling mightily this winter to stay warm. Heating costs in cold-weather states consume more of low-income consumers' income and rely disproportionately on price-volatile energy sources like home heating oil. According to the Energy Information Administration's (EIA) Short-Term Energy Outlook released last month, home heating oil is the only winter heating source projected to rise in cost this winter. The EIA projects that the average Northeastern fuel oil household will spend nearly \$2,000 in heating costs this winter.

Simply put, our constituents live in states that experience some of the harshest, coldest winters in the United States. According the National Climatic Data Center (NCDC) at the U.S. Department of Commerce, average temperatures in the Northeast were 10 to 15 degrees colder these past several months than in the Southeastern U.S. For low-income consumers in our states, winters often force many families to confront stark choices between heating their homes and feeding their families. In releasing LIHEAP contingency funds for Fiscal Year 2009, your department set aside \$100 million to aid those states with low-income populations that rely heavily on heating oil to heat their residences. Given the projected rise in home heating oil expenditures this winter, we strongly believe that your department should follow that precedent again this year in releasing these remaining funds.

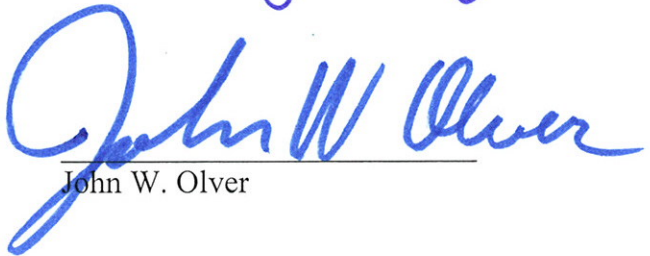
For these reasons, we hope you will utilize the remaining LIHEAP contingency funds to assist cold-weather states in aiding their low-income residents this winter. We appreciate your understanding of an issue that is so important to our individual states.

Sincerely,

  
Christopher S. Murphy

  
Edward J. Markey

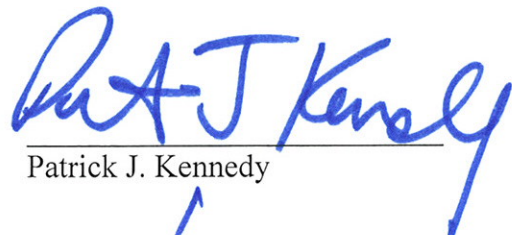
  
Barney Frank

  
John W. Olver

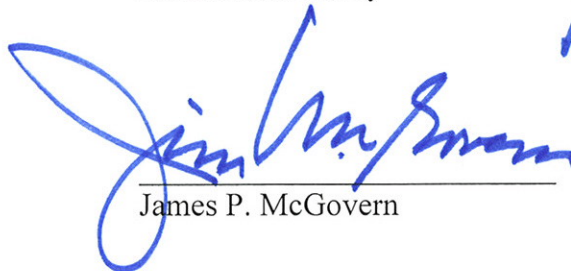
  
Rosa L. DeLauro

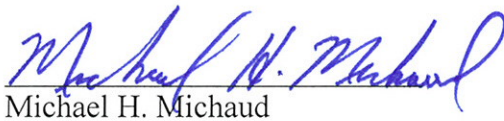
  
William D. Delahunt

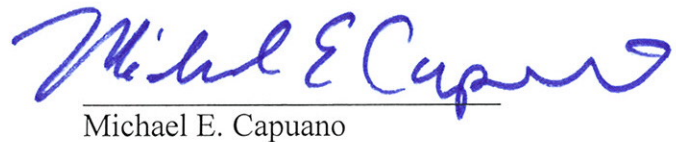
  
Richard E. Neal

  
Patrick J. Kennedy

  
John B. Larson

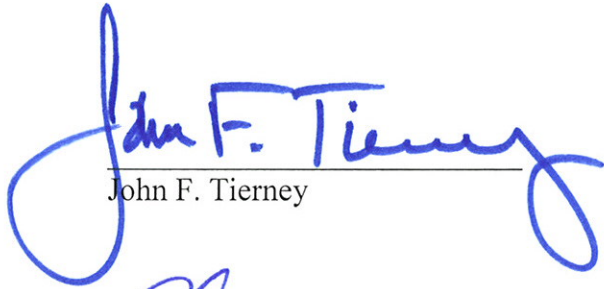
  
James P. McGovern


  
Michael H. Michaud

  
Michael E. Capuano

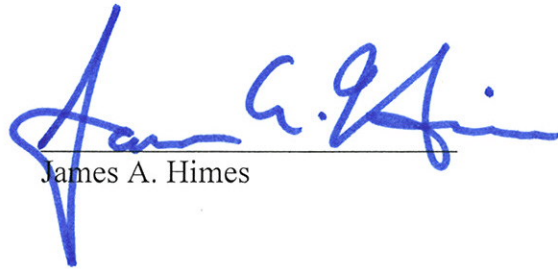
  
Stephen F. Lynch

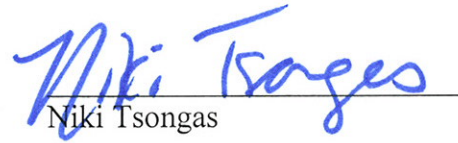
  
James R. Langevin


  
John F. Tierney

  
Paul W. Hodes

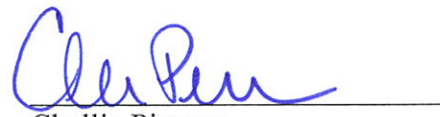
  
Peter Welch

  
James A. Himes

  
Niki Tsongas

  
Carol Shea-Porter

  
Joe Courtney

  
Chellie Pingree